

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 12, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We write with deep concern regarding the more than 12.4 million people—primarily in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia—in need of emergency assistance in the eastern Horn of Africa. The crisis is the worst in Somalia, where the U.N. estimates that 3.7 million people now require life-saving humanitarian assistance, and where an estimated 27,000 children under five are reported to have died in the last three months. Since July 19, the United Nations has declared famine in five areas in southern Somalia.

We are encouraged by the commitment and actions the Administration has taken to address the needs of this region in what is the worst drought the region has seen in sixty years. We are also heartened that effective early warning systems developed by USAID allowed the United States to take steps to pre-position supplies and food in the region well ahead of needs, resulting in 7.5 million Ethiopians not requiring emergency assistance due to productive safety net programs. These efforts, coupled with actions undertaken through the Feed the Future initiative, are helping to build the resiliency of people in Ethiopia and Kenya to cope with recurring droughts in the region.

Amidst this heartening news, we remain concerned that insecurity and the actions of al-Shabaab—a designated terrorist organization—continue to inhibit aid to those most affected by the crisis. We strongly condemn al-Shabaab, which has denied access to food, medicine, and other emergency relief for hundreds of thousands of Somali men, women, and children—triggering a massive humanitarian crisis and refugee flows which threaten to destabilize a region of considerable strategic interest to the United States. We welcome news reports this past weekend that al-Shabaab forces have withdrawn from the Somali capital of Mogadishu and that agencies delivering food aid, medicines and other essentials might now have unfettered access to famine victims in the capital region.

Regrettably, we understand the areas in southern Somalia where famine has been declared align closely with those where the international aid community has had little access. We also understand that, given the overwhelming need in the region, the U.S. Government, alongside the international community, has been moving aggressively to save lives and provide assistance to those in need as quickly as possible.

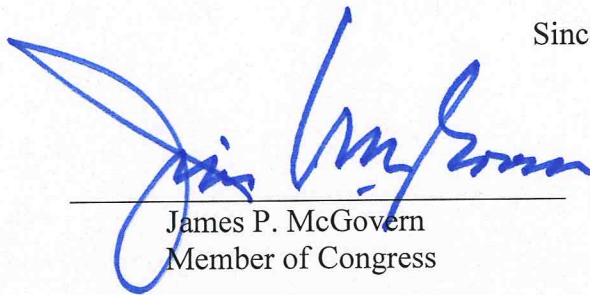
Madam Secretary, we urge you to continue to take all possible steps to support the efforts of nongovernmental organizations and United Nations aid groups to provide humanitarian assistance to families in these insecure areas. For example, some Members have recommended U.S. leadership in establishing humanitarian corridors to reach those in greatest need in central and southern Somalia. In addition, we commend the additional guidance the Administration has

issued to provide legal protections to groups working to save the lives of people living under al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. Providing life-saving assistance to avert mass starvation is fundamental to who we are as Americans, and we support your commitment to continuing this critically needed effort.

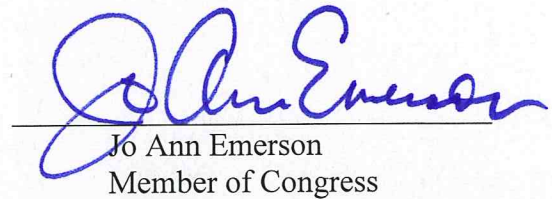
By extending a helping hand to those suffering under the tyranny of al-Shabaab, we will not only save lives, but also prove, by example, that we are a just and compassionate people. Indeed, providing this life-saving assistance in southern Somalia is not only the right thing to do – it is in our national interest.

Please keep us updated on how the U.S. continues to address the famine and humanitarian crisis in the eastern Horn of Africa, and please do not hesitate to reach out to us should our offices be able to assist you in this humanitarian effort.

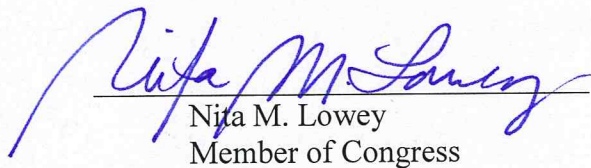
Sincerely,



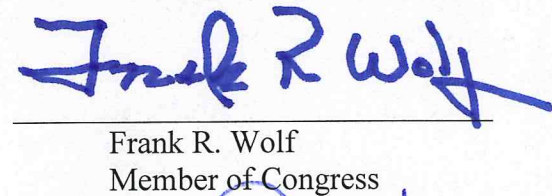
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



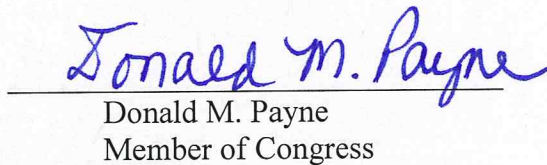
Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress



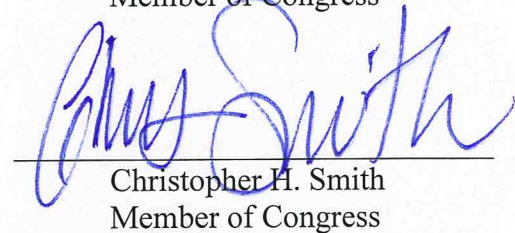
Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress



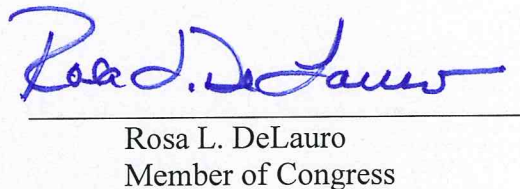
Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



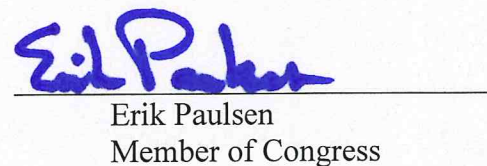
Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



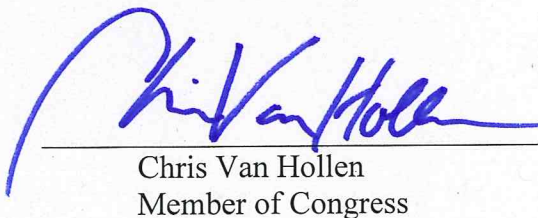
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



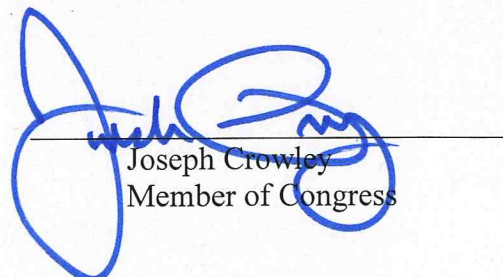
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



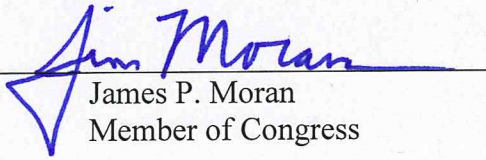
Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress

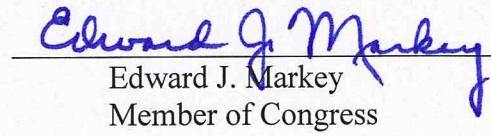



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

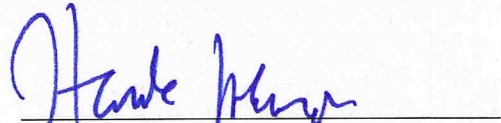


Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress


Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress


Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

cc: Raj Shah, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development